

Japan. - Stout

BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

OF THE

REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA

→ SKETCH ←

OF THE

South Japan Mission

BY

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THE SOUTH JAPAN MISSION OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA.

Nagasaki may be called the birthplace of Protestant missions in Japan. It was here that the idea of missions to the Japanese first assumed practical form; from here the call for missionaries was sent; and here the first missionaries came. The facts are these:

Not long after the opening of the country by treaty, Dr. S. Wells Williams and the Rev. E. W. Syle, missionaries to China, the former of the American Board and the latter of the Board of the American Episcopal Church, came on a visit to Nagasaki. They made the acquaintance of the officers of the U. S. S. "Powhatan," then in port, and were one day invited to join a party including the chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Wood, in making a call upon the governor of the city. In the conversation the governor took occasion to say that, as the country was now open to trade, the people would be glad of anything the foreigners had to bring them, except two things, opium and Christianity. This remark naturally became a subject of thought and discussion by these three Christian men. It was evident to them that the governor's ideas of Christianity, which led him to consider it an evil on a par with opium, had been derived from the history of a false form of the faith in his own country in former times. They, therefore, decided to make an effort to have true Christianity introduced, and agreed to write letters to the Boards of the Episcopal, Presbyterian and Reformed Churches in America, urging the sending of

missionaries to Japan. In response to these letters, missions were established by these three churches. The Episcopal Church has the honor of being the first to occupy the field. Two men were located at Nagasaki in the summer of 1859. The mission of the Reformed Church was established in the same place a few months later by the Rev. G. F. Verbeck.

The history of this branch of the mission for the next ten years, is entirely that connected with the personal experiences of its founder. In a reply to a request for information concerning this period, he wrote as follows:

"I left New York on the 5th of May, 1859, in the company of Dr. S. R. Brown and Dr. D. B. Simmons, all of our mission, together with our families. I arrived at Nagasaki on the 7th of November, 1859, and my wife, whom I was obliged to leave for a time in Shanghai, on December 31st of the same year.

"We found the natives not at all accessible touching religious matters. When such a subject was mooted in the presence of a native, his hand would almost involuntarily be applied edgewise to his throat, to indicate the extreme perilousness of such a discussion. If, on such an occasion, more than one native happened to be present, the natural shyness was, if possible, still more apparent, for there was little confidence between man and man, chiefly on account of the abominable secret spy system, which we found in full swing when we first arrived and for several years after. It was evident that before we could hope to accomplish anything in our appropriate work *two* things were essential; we had to gain the general confidence of the people and we had to master the native tongue.

"As to the first, by the most knowing and suspicious, we were regarded as people that had come to seduce the masses from their fealty to the 'god-country,' and to corrupt their morals generally. These gross misconceptions we

had to endeavor to dispel by invariable kindness and generosity, by showing that we had come to do good to them only and on all occasions of our intercourse, whether we met in friendship, on business, on duty or otherwise; a very simple Christian duty this!

"As to the other pre-requisite to successful work, we were in many respects not favorably situated, and our progress was correspondingly slow. We had none, or hardly any, of the helps for studying the language that have been so abundantly furnished to those who arrived at later dates. The discovery of a new part of speech, or of a new construction, seemed to us often like the discovery of a new land and often was the source of great joy.

"As to myself, I may say that, as an auxiliary in my endeavors to secure the above two requisites, I early commenced to give gratuitous instruction at my home in the English language, and various other useful branches. This course, under Providence, led to my being early identified with educational matters, and did much to give shape and color to my career in this country.

"As to baptisms, a full account of them may be found in Mrs. Sangster's 'Manual of the Missions of the Reformed Church in America,' by the Board of Publication.* This is an account of the first two baptisms. The only other case at Nagasaki, in my time, was that of the priest Shimidzu in 1868."

Mr. Verbeck taught for several years in a school established under the patronage of the governor of Nagasaki, primarily for training young men to become interpreters in government offices, and for a short time also in a school established for giving a more liberal education, by the *daimyo* of Hizen. Early in 1869, he was called to Tokyo to assist in organizing a school for the study of Western languages and the sciences, which later grew into the Imperial University. For this purpose he left Nagasaki in March the same year.

* See Appendix.

The Rev. Henry Stout and wife arrived in Nagasaki ten days before the departure of Mr. Verbeck and family. It was arranged that the place to be vacated in the schools be taken by the new missionary. The Hizen school was soon transferred to Tokyo as had been previously planned. The arrangement with the city school continued for three years and a half. During this time opportunities were not entirely wanting to do some real mission work, especially with pupils living in the house with their teacher, or even occasionally with others in the school who were my intimate friends and could be induced to come quietly on Sundays for Bible study. But a great deal of the same sort of timidity which Mr. Verbeck had found among the people was still manifested. This was especially marked after the persecution of 1870, in which about four thousand Roman Catholic Christians, descendants of the converts of former times, living in villages near Nagasaki, were suddenly arrested and deported to different parts of the country. At the same time, also, two Protestants, one "the priest Shimidzu" before referred to, were arrested and thrown into prison. Gradually, however, the reserve gave way in great measure, and in 1872 the time seemed favorable for beginning more direct and active mission work. The position in the school was, therefore, resigned.

Still, instruction in English appeared to be the means by which the beginning must be made. The first step taken was to gather an evening class of young men at the mission home, with the Bible as the principle text book. Soon as many as could be accommodated were in regular attendance.

In connection with teaching, both in the government school and in the private class, opportunities frequently offered to present the subject of female education. And not long after the class for boys was well under way, some persons who had been friendly for a long time, came and

asked that Mrs. Stout teach a class of girls, giving special attention to sewing, knitting, etc. This she undertook to do in the afternoon, also at the mission home. These classes were visited and met with such favor that, not long after their organization, a number of men united in a request for establishing a joint school in the city at their expense for rent and incidentals. The agreement was that, as the teachers' time would be given gratuitously, the instruction should be entirely at their option. However, it was understood that for the time being the religious instruction should be given at the teachers' residence. In a short time a school of about fifty girls and thirty boys and young men, was in successful operation.

Early in 1873, the edicts against Christianity were removed, and the time seemed now ripe for more open Christian teaching. After a time the Bible was introduced into the school, as a voluntary study. The result of this was, first, a remonstrance to the teachers, and then intimidation toward those of the pupils who had engaged in Bible study. When both were found to be ineffectual, the school was summarily closed. However, there is good reason to believe that those who had the school immediately in charge cared little about the study of the Bible. But the fact of its having been introduced into the school had been noised abroad, and there was great excitement over it. Such pressure was brought to bear upon these men, that there was nothing for them to do but yield to public clamor.

A few days after the closing of the school, a number of those who had been in either department, came begging to be taught again as at the first. And so the classes went on as formerly, with the best elements of what had constituted the school in the city.

Urgent requests were sent to the Board for aid in carrying on the work thus opening up, especially that for

women. The class for girls was continued, in hope that help would be sent, till the summer of the following year, when Mrs. Stout's health became such that she was obliged to dismiss it. The class for boys, however, was carried on for many years. For this work, a school house was erected on the mission grounds, by funds kindly furnished by a friend. Of the young men first taught, three were baptized in the Autumn of 1873. The class was never large, the necessity soon arriving for giving much time to the instruction of young men looking forward to the ministry, which precluded the possibility of the teacher's giving sufficient time to general instruction to encourage pupils to enter the class.

In 1874, the Rev. C. H. H. Wolff and wife were transferred to the mission at Nagasaki. In addition to time given to the study of the language, Mr. Wolff gave assistance in teaching for about one year. He retired from the mission in 1876.

In the summer of 1874, the way seemed to be fairly open for taking still another step in advance. A Sunday-school and preaching service had been carried on for some time in the school-house, but all this was done rather in private. A lot was now secured and a chapel built in the foreign concession, just at the entrance to the native city. And here the first public proclamation of the Gospel was made in the southern part of Japan. Crowds were in attendance from the first, and for two years there was little sign of diminishing interest or curiosity. Whenever the doors were opened for services, the room would be filled. Frequently, in winter, services would be continued night after night for a week or more. A preaching place was opened in the centre of the city in 1875, with experiences similar to those at the chapel. But the apparent results of all these efforts were exceedingly small. The seed for the most part seems to have fallen by the way-side. However, in December, 1876, a

church was organized with ten adult members and two baptized children.

In 1878, Kagoshima was occupied as an out-station with Mr. A. Segawa, one of the three first baptized, in charge. He was well received, and from the first, as at Nagasaki, there was a remarkable eagerness to hear preaching. The apparent results were in the beginning, great, many coming forward eagerly asking for baptism. But the early promises were not realized in the harvest. The history of the work here indicates that the soil is fruitful of thorns.

The same year the Misses Farrington came out to establish the "Jonathan Sturges Seminary" for girls. A small class then being taught was passed over to them. These ladies, however, soon went to Yokohama by physician's recommendation, and from there a little later returned to America.

Up to this time, the work of the missionaries of the Reformed Church at Yokohama and Nagasaki had been carried on quite separately, but by direction of the Board a meeting was held in Yokohama in September, 1878, and "The Japan Mission" was fully organized. From that time during eleven years, while this arrangement continued, the branch of the mission in the south was known as "The Nagasaki Station."

Permission having been given by the Board for Mr. Stout and family to return to America, they left the field in the spring of 1879. The work of the station was left in the hands of native assistants. One man was in Nagasaki in charge of the church, in which there were twenty-three members, and one in charge of the newly established out-station at Kagoshima. A third man was sent to Tokyo to continue his theological studies.

The third decade, beginning with 1879, was marked by the arrival of the Rev. E. S. Booth and wife. Mr. and Mrs. Stout returned a year later. Lines of work in educa-

tion and evangelization were now taken up, which gave promise of great success. A school for boys was opened; a class of five theological students was organized; Rev. A. Segawa, having been lately ordained, was appointed assistant in theological instruction; a church was organized in Kagoshima with twenty-four members, and Saga was occupied as an out-station. But at the end of 1881, Mr. and Mrs. Booth went to Yokohama, and were soon after appointed to Ferris Seminary.

Urgent requests were now sent for reinforcements, and in the end, the subject was presented definitely to the effect that, for the success of the work, there must be schools for both boys and girls, and superintendence of the evangelistic work. This plan called for the appointment of two men and two single ladies, and appropriations for school buildings. It was further urged that, if this could not be done, the field in the south be passed over to others. The Board decided to do what was asked, and in 1883, the Rev. N. H. Demarest and wife arrived, it being understood that he prepare for the evangelistic work. In the following year, the Rev. H. Harris and wife, and Miss M. E. Brokaw and Miss C. B. Richards arrived under appointment for the educational work. Miss Richards left the mission a few months after her arrival, and Mr. Harris asked to be transferred to Tokyo, to which place he moved after one year's connection with the Nagasaki station. In 1886, the Rev. A. Oltmans was appointed, and with his wife, arrived in the autumn of the same year, to undertake the establishment of "Steele Memorial School."

The buildings for the two schools were immediately commenced and completed the next summer. The funds for Sturges Seminary had been provided by an appropriation of \$5,000 from the Woman's Board. This sum had been collected by special gifts from various sources, among which was one of \$3,000 from Mrs.

Jonathan Sturges, president of the Woman's Board, whence the name of the institution. The buildings for Steele Memorial School were paid for by a gift of \$5,000 from Dr. William H. Steele, President of the Synods Board, as a memorial to his late son.

The two schools were formally opened in the autumn of 1887, Miss M. E. Brokaw in charge of Sturges Seminary and Rev. A. Oltmans of Steele Memorial School. Both had been teaching in rooms temporarily provided, Miss Brokaw having succeeded in gathering a small class of girls, and Mr. Oltmans in enlarging the classes being taught on his arrival. They thus had pupils with whom to make a beginning in the new buildings.

A short time after the opening, Miss R. L. Irvine arrived under appointment to Sturges Seminary. For the first two years this institution received but limited patronage. In the spring of 1890, Miss Brokaw asked to be transferred to Ferris Seminary. The Board consented to this, and soon after appointed Miss C. B. Lanterman to take the place she left. In 1891 it was considered desirable to put both schools under the direction of native principals, to make them conform more fully to the idea of schools for the Japanese, and Mr. M. Saito, who had long been identified with Sturges Seminary, was made its principal. Under this plan one of the ladies acts as vice-principal in charge of the home department, and the mission as a board of directors with ultimate control. The same year Miss A. B. Stout was employed as teacher of music. The next spring Miss Irvine went to America on leave of absence, during which her connection with the mission was terminated. At the close of the summer vacation, just as Miss Lanterman was making preparations for the opening of the fall term, she was taken sick, and died quite suddenly, after but a few days of suffering. Soon after this Miss S. M. Couch arrived, under appointment for Bible work among women,

but on account of the vacancy, she spent a year in work in the Seminary.

Steele Memorial School was organized into two departments, theological and academic, the teachers giving instruction in both departments as necessity requires. Mr. Oltmans conducted the school for the first three years after its formal opening in the new buildings. Then for a year, Mr. H. V. S. Peeke, who had been sent out as a teacher for a limited term, was in charge. In accordance with the plan for putting the schools under the direction of natives, the Rev. M. Ohgimi was made principal in 1891. The same year, the Rev. A. Pieters was appointed teacher, and with his wife arrived in time for the opening of the fall term. In the following year, the name of the institution was changed to that of "Steele College." Twenty-one men, in five classes, have graduated from the academic department, all except one being Christians. The graduation of the earlier classes became possible through the instruction given by different members of the mission before the school was established. Seven of the graduates continued their studies in theology, two having already finished that course. In connection with the earlier theological instruction, twenty men have been trained for the ministry, and as ordained or licensed preachers are now engaged in Christian work.

The missions of the Presbyterian churches in America, north and south, laboring on fields contiguous to that occupied by the Reformed Church Mission, send men to the theological department of the college to be trained for the ministry. And to aid in the instruction, the mission of the church, north, has sent a graduate of the Meiji Gakuin and of M'Cormick Theological Seminary.

As to evangelization proper, it has been a constant cause for regret that this most important branch of work has, of necessity, been left almost entirely in the hands of native evangelists. Mr. Demarest was the first specially

appointed to this work, but soon after he was able to make a beginning on the field, he was obliged to go to America with his family, on account of Mrs. Demarest's health. A few months after his return, he was obliged to leave a second time, and finally, for the same reason, Mr. Oltmans resigned his position in the school, by special request of the mission, to take up the work thus left, but after two years, spent partly in study of the language and partly in work, he went with his family to America on leave of absence. However, the training of men and the opening of out-stations has gone on, till sixteen principal places have been occupied, where evangelists reside and carry on the work, and from which many other places are reached and services held at stated times. In two places near Nagasaki work is done regularly by students in the theological school. Four churches have been organized, namely, at Nagasaki, Kagoshima, Karatsu and Saga. Two of these churches, those at Nagasaki and Karatsu, have settled pastors. The reports from churches and out-stations, at the end of the year 1893, show that there were four hundred and forty-two names of members on the rolls, of which eighty-four were of children.

By action of the Board in 1889, the Nagasaki Station was made an independent mission. It is known as "The South Japan Mission of the Reformed Church in America."

The latest additions to the forces were the Rev. H. V. S. Peeke and wife, Miss H. M. Lansing and Miss M. E. Duryea, all having arrived in the autumn of 1893, Mr. and Mrs. Peeke went to Kagoshima, expecting to make that their field. They are the first of the mission to locate outside of Nagasaki. The two ladies were appointed to Sturges Seminary.

Following is a summary for the end of the year, 1893 :

MISSIONARIES.

Rev. Henry Stout and wife, Rev. A. Oltmans and wife,
Rev. A. Pieters and wife, Miss S. M. Couch, Rev. H. V

S. Peeke and wife, Miss H. M. Lansing and Miss M. E. Duryea.

STURGES SEMINARY.

Mr. M. Saito, principal; Miss S. M. Couch, vice-principal, in charge of home department; Miss A. B. Stout, teacher of music; three native teachers engaged on full time, and four for special lessons; sixty-two pupils, forty-two being boarders; thirty-seven pupils members of the church in full communion, and six others baptized in infancy.

(At the annual meeting it was decided that Miss Lansing and Miss Duryea take charge at the beginning of the new year, Miss Lansing was appointed vice-principal.)

STEELE COLLEGE.

Rev. M. Ohgimi, principal; Rev. H. Stout, Rev. A. Pieters, and five native teachers engaged on full time, and three others for special lectures; seventy-four pupils on the roll, twenty-four being in the theological department; twenty-two in the academic department members of the church; about two-thirds of the pupils boarders; twenty-one graduates from the academic department and twenty from the theological department.

EVANGELISTIC WORK.

Rev. A. Oltmans (in America); Miss S. M. Couch, under appointment for Bible work among women, but temporarily engaged in Sturges Seminary; Rev. H. V. S. Peeke studying the language; two pastors and nineteen evangelists, one ordained and thirteen licensed; Nagasaki and sixteen out-stations with resident evangelists, at two out-stations two men; about twenty other places where work is done regularly by evangelists and theological students; four organized churches; three hundred and fifty-eight adult church members and eighty-four baptized children; three hundred and thirty-three Sunday-school pupils; contributions for 1893, yen 510.85.

PUBLICATION.

By Rev. H. Stout: "A Brief Statement of Christian Doctrine," a translation and adaptation of Dr. S. M. Woodbridge's "Lectures on Sacred History," 1 vol., and of his "Lectures on Church History," 2 vols.

By Rev. A. Segawa: "A Commentary on the First Fifty Psalms," a translation of Dr. S. M. Woodbridge's "Analysis of Systematic Theology," two editions; of Dr. W. G. T. Shedd's "Homiletics"; and of Dr. J. L. Hurlbut's "Biblical Geography."

LIST OF MISSIONARIES.

	Arrived	Retired.
Rev. G. F. Verbeck and Mrs. Verbeck,	1859	1869
Rev. Henry Stout and Mrs. Stout,	1869	
Rev. C. H. H. Wolff and Mrs. Wolff,	1874	1876
Miss E. F. Farrington,	1878	1879
Miss M. J. Farrington,	"	"
Rev. E. S. Booth and Mrs. Booth,	1879	1881
Rev. N. H. Demarest and Mrs. Demarest,	1881	1890
Rev. H. Harris and Mrs. Harris,	1884	1885
Miss C. B. Richards,	"	"
Miss M. E. Brokaw,	"	1890
Rev. A. Oltmans and Mrs. Oltmans,	1886	
Miss R. L. Irvine,	1887	1893
Miss C. B. Lanterman,*	1890	1892
Rev. A. Pieters and Mrs. Pieters,	1891	
Miss S. M. Couch,	1892	
Rev. H. V. S. Peeke and Mrs. Peeke,	1893	
Miss H. M. Lansing,	"	
Miss M. E. Duryea,	"	

TEACHERS EMPLOYED.

Mr. H. V. S. Peeke,	1888	1891
Miss A. B. Stout,	1891	

* Deceased.

APPENDIX.

FIRST BAPTISMS AT NAGASAKI.

In the year 1854 an English fleet of war came into the harbor of Nagasaki. This was before any treaty with England, and such an event created great excitement. A large force of troops was gathered to watch the vessels and prevent any trade or intercourse with the people. The commander-in-chief was named Wakasa, and he was accustomed to go out in a boat to see that all was right and that no secret communication was attempted.

On one of these excursions he discovered in the water a small pocket Testament, which was quite unlike any book he had ever seen, and he was very anxious to know its contents. After considerable inquiry, he learned from some Dutch interpreter that it told about God and Jesus Christ. This only increased his curiosity to understand it all; and having heard there was a translation in China, he sent to Shanghai and procured a copy. Having returned to his home at Saga he began the study of the Testament, and induced four others to join him. One of these was a brother named Ayabe, and another a relative named Molino.

In the autumn of 1862 Ayabe came to Nagasaki for further instruction, and was taught by Rev. Dr. Verbeck. During the following spring, this man came to Dr. Verbeck at night and warned him of danger to himself and family if they did not leave at once. It is probable that this caution saved their lives, as they fled to China and remained there until the serious troubles which followed were ended.

When Dr. Verbeck returned he found that Ayabe had

received some government appointment which removed him from Nagasaki, and it seemed that all his labors and prayers were to be in vain. But not long after, Wakasa sent Molino (who had learned to read English) with instructions to read over and get explanations of such portions of the Scriptures as they could not understand, and he was also to procure any books that would be helpful in their efforts to know the word of God. In this manner the Bible class was carried on for nearly three years, the faithful messenger making the two days' journey to Nagasaki and returning in due time with the desired knowledge.

On the 14th of May, 1866, a messenger came to Dr. Verbeck and announced that some high officials from the province of Hizen had arrived and desired him to appoint a day and hour for an interview. To his great joy and surprise these men proved to be Wakasa with his brother and Molino.

At the time appointed Wakasa and his train appeared. He was then one of the ministers of state or governors of the province. In appearance he was tall and dignified, with a most pleasing expression. He said to Dr. Verbeck, "I have long known you in my mind, and desired to converse with you, and I am very happy that, in God's providence, I am at last permitted this privilege." Two of his sons were with him.

These men had evidently received the word with all readiness of mind, and now sought only for some additional light in reference to Christian character and customs. In the course of their conversation, Wakasa said: "Sir, I cannot tell you my feelings when for the first time I read the account of the character and work of Jesus Christ. I had never seen, or heard, or imagined such a person. I was filled with admiration, overwhelmed with emotion, and taken captive by the record of His nature and life." He showed great familiarity with

the Bible, made several pertinent quotations, and was prepared to believe all that Jesus said and to do whatever he required.

After a long conversation on the power and love of Christ, Dr. Verbeck was taken quite by surprise by the request from Wakasa that he and his brother should be baptized. It was well known that such an act would be attended with great peril, as the law of the land strictly prohibited the Christian religion. Molino also wished for baptism. Dr. Verbeck warned them not to entertain any superstitious notions in regard to the efficacy and importance of baptism, and told them of the sacred obligations of those who received it. After explaining the form, they were asked to decide, as in the presence of God. Without hesitation the request was repeated, with the simple provision that it should not be made public, as it would not only endanger their own lives, but their families' also. Further examination showed that their experience had been thorough. They felt their sins to be great and realized the need of a Saviour. Recognizing the insufficiency of all other systems, they joyfully received Christ as their hope for time and for eternity.

The following Sabbath evening was appointed for the ceremony, and at the appointed hour the three men appeared. Their retainers had been dismissed with orders to return in an hour. The shutters were closed, and after some words of exhortation they were baptized and partook of the sacrament. "Now," said Wakasa, "I have that which I have long been heartily wishing for." He then told the story of the book found twelve years before in the harbor of Nagasaki, and all that it had led to. Wakasa returned home (like the eunuch who had met Philip) rejoicing in the love of God and presence of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Verbeck removed to Tokyo, and the account sent to America was carefully preserved and for a long time was known to but few.



